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Message Text

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64
ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00

PM-03 H-01 INR-05 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 COME-00 EB-04 LAB-01 SIL-01 AID-05

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FM AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4801
INFO DIA
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C O N F I D E N T I A L LA PAZ 7427

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ELAB, PINT, BL
SUBJ: GOB REDEFINES ROLE OF ORGANIZED LABOR

1. THE GOB ISSUED TWO EDICTS NAMING AND DESCRIBING THE FUNCTIONS OF "LABOR COORDINATORS" WHO WILL FILL THE VOID CREATED BY THE SUSPENSION OF NORMAL TRADE UNION ACTIVITY. THE TEXT OF THESE EDICTS, SUPREME

DECREE NO. 11952 AND SUPREME RESOLUTION NO. 174780, WILL BE SUBMITTED BY AIRGRAM.

2. "LABOR COORDINATORS" HAVE THREE MAIN FUNCTIONS: A) TO PROVIDE A CHANNEL BETWEEN THE WORKERS AND MANAGEMENT IN THEIR INDUSTRY:

B) TO ORGANIZE COMMITTEES OF FOUR WORKERS TO DEAL WITH SPECIFIC LABOR PROBLEMS (COMMITTEES ARE TO BE DISBANDED WHEN THE PROBLEM IS RESOLVED): AND C) TO HOLD THE PROPERTY OF THEIR ORGANIZATIONS IN TRUST.

3. GROUPS OF LABOR COORDINATORS WERE NAMED FOR TWENTY-FIVE MAJOR LABOR SECTORS. THE NUMBER OF COORDINATORS IN EACH SECTOR VARIED, E.G., MUSICIANS HAVE ONE, MINERS HAVE NINE. ALMOST 70PERCENT OF THE CONFIDENTIAL

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COORDINATORS WERE ACTUAL LEADERS IN THE VARIOUS TRADE UNION ORGANI-

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ZATIONS. THE REMAINING APPROXIMATELY 30PERCENT WERE WELL KNOWN FORMER LABOR LEADERS. THE MOST SWEEPING CHANGES IN LEADERSHIP WERE EFFECTED AMONG THE FACTORY AND BANK WORKERS.

4. ALTHOUGH THE GOB DID NOT USE THE OCCASION TO MAKE WHOLESALE REPLACEMENTS IN UNION LEADERSHIP, THE RULES UNDER WHICH THE COORDINATORS MUST OPERATE LEAVE LITTLE ROOM FOR AUTHENTIC TRADE UNION ACTIVITY. THE COORDINATORS ARE APPOINTED UNDER THE TERMS OF THE RECENTLY PROMULGATED DECREE OF OBLIGATORY CIVIL SERVICE AND ARE UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOR. THE WORKERS SERVED BY THE COORDINATORS WERE FORBIDDEN TO STRIKE, SLOWDOWN OR SABOTAGE UNDER PENALTY OF DISMISSAL WITHOUT SOCIAL BENEFITS. UNIONS ARE FORBIDDEN TO RECEIVE INCOME FROM DUES OR OTHER SOURCES.

5. A SOURCE IN THE MINERS FEDERATION REPORTS THAT THE SIX EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS, INCLUDING FORMER SECRETARY GENERAL VICTOR LOPEZ, WHO WERE AMONG THOSE NAMED AS LABOR COORDINATORS FOR THE MINERS WILL DECLINE TO SERVE. THIS ACTION WILL EXPOSE THEM TO PENALTIES OF IMPROSONMENT AND/OR EXILE. ON THE OTHER HAND, THERE ARE INDICATIONS THAT COORDINATORS NAMED FOR CONSTRUCTION WORKERS, DRIVERS AND RAILWAY WORKERS WILL ACCEPT THEIR APPOINTMENTS.

6. COMMENT: OBVIOUSLY, THE GOB'S NEW ORDER FOR LABOR ORGANIZATION IS HIGHLY DISTASTEFUL TO TRADE
UNIONISTS. HOWEVER, EXCEPT FOR
STRIKES BY THE MINERS OF CATAVI AND SIGLO XX AND BY FACTORY WORKERS IN SEVERAL ESTABLISHMENTS IN COCHABAMBA, THERE IS CLEAR RELUCTANCE ON THE PART OF WORKERS THUS FAR TO TEST THE POWER OF THE SECURITY FORCES BY STRIKES OR DEMONSTRATIONS.
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